

HIGHEST BATTLEGROUND TO BECOME A TOURISM ATTRACTION



India is going to bring 42 trekkers to the Siachen glacier in the disputed Kashmir region. The first-ever group of trekkers to Siachen glacier will set off even though the Pakistani authorities oppose it. This place is also known as the world's highest battlefield. The clashes over Siachen started in 1984 when Indian troops occupied the 6,300-meter-high glacier. Since that time, soldiers from both countries spent their time on the icy peaks. The harsh weather in this region has claimed hundreds of soldiers' lives.

Now, Indians have decided the glacier is an ideal spot for adventure tourism. The reasons for this activity seems mainly political. "The message really is that this is not disputed territory, that Siachen is part of Indian territory, or territory under Indian control in Jammu and Kashmir, and this sort of activity merely, in a sense, symbolizes that fact," said Bharat Karnad, a defense analyst with New Delhi's Center for Policy Research. "Pakistan claims it is disputed territory and I think they are protesting primarily because they think that trekkers and such others would, in effect, undercut their claims to the Siachen area."

The trekkers will be the first civilians officially allowed to visit the glacier. The glacier is in eastern Karakoram Range in the Himalaya Mountains along the disputed India-Pakistan border. It is the longest glacier in the Karakoram and second longest in the world's non-polar areas. The name "Siachen" means "the place of wild roses". It is called so because of Himalayan wildflowers found in the valleys below the glacier. The glacier presents an important water source. Siachen's melting waters are the main source of the Nubra River. Experts claim that global warming and the military presence have a devastating impact on the glacier. The volume of the glacier has been reduced by 35 percent over the last twenty years.

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